**Wilson Greene Regional Housing Committee**

**July 17, 2018**

**Facilitator, Yolanda Taylor, Legal Aid**

Present: Candice Rountree, WCDSS; Claire Todd, Wesley Shelter; Lynne White, Wesley Shelter; Judi Thurston, United Way; Peter Gilbert, Legal Aid of NC; Shana Baum, Hope Station; Valinda Belton, Wilson Housing Authority; Gabrielle Atkinson, Endeavors; Judith Melly, Hope Station; Britney Holmes, Carolina Family Health Centers; Elisabeth Farnsworth, Habitat for Humanity; Sydney Idzikowski, NC Justice Center; LaTasha McNair, Eastpointe; Virginia Bane, Wilson 2020; Tony Conner, NC Works; John Morck, City of Wilson Planning and Community Development; Tamey Knight, VOA; Linda Walling, Hope Station

**Welcome/Introductions**

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

Minutes approved with no revisions.

**Balance of State Information**

Candice provided an overview of BOS, Neuse Regional Committee and our local committee, as there were a lot of new attendees. Linda Walling from Hope Station is our Coordinated Assessment Lead, Candice from DSS is the Secretary/Webmaster, LaTasha, Eastpointe is our Regional Lead. Locally, we do the Point in Time Count, Operation Wrap-Up and make referrals for housing assistance. Hope Station is the only Wilson County agency that receives ESG funding. Mary Mallory, DSS is our funding committee lead. The funding committee reviews Emergency Solutions Grant(ESG) and Continuum of Care(CoC) grants for the region. Mary, LaTasha, and Denise from the Neuse Regional Committee serve on the funding committee and they need additional representation. This is time limited, and will involve a few phone calls and maybe two face to face meetings. Lynne White and Elisabeth Farnsworth agreed to serve on the funding committee.

**LaTasha gave an update from Balance of State.**

NC Coalition to End Homelessness will become manager of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). There will be an RFA for Emergency Solutions Grant funding released mid-July. The due date is October 26. Each applicant will present to the entire six county Neuse Region.

**Coordinated Assessment**

Judi and Linda have been talking with Heather from the state’s 211 program about being the lead on Coordinated Assessment and serving as a single point of entry for anyone who makes a phone call requesting housing. 211 is doing this in other counties and they are willing to come and talk with our committee. They would be completing the Prevention/Diversion screen. We will discuss at a later meeting.

Linda Walling has been the CA lead for the region and it does involve a lot of work. Hope Station was recently awarded $30,000 to assist in this process. There are 13 regions and only 5 were funded.

**ESG** – Shana gave a report and shared a handout. Coordinated entry phone calls are happening at noon on Wednesdays for our Neuse Region.

**Veterans** – no report

**Evictions**

Yolanda invited guest speakers today to discuss Wilson County’s rate of eviction. Sydney Idzikowski from the NC Justice Center and Peter Gilbert from Legal Aid of NC. Sydney recommended the book, **Evicted** by Matthew Desmond. Wilson County has the fourth highest rate of evictions in the state, with an average of about 8 per day. Evictions peak in Aug/Sept and Dec/Jan when parents are making decisions between bills and back to school clothes and Christmas expenses. There is a blacklist in our community of names that landlords are not interested in renting to because of liability issues.

Sydney reviewed the eviction process and provided some handouts.

Peter discussed a new initiative in Durham County that is a City/County partnership. Legal Aid and Durham County DSS are working together to address their eviction crisis. Lawyers are being used to help prevent evictions. DSS funding is being accessed to provide rent payment. The City of Durham is investing $200,000 to hire attorneys, and they have been able to keep 66% of tenants in place. In Durham, everyone who is evicted receives a flyer about the Eviction Diversion Program.

There was lots of discussion and presentation from our guests.

Valinda shared that at Section 8 and WHA, there is a problem with tenants damaging property, not having good credit, and making poor decisions. She shared that they lost 20 landlords recently.

Candice encouraged folks to read Evicted; it was recommended by our county manager. Candice will also speak with the Durham County DSS contact, Janeen Gordon.

There did seem to be a consensus that the group is concerned that we are the fourth highest in the state. There could by systemic and cultural issues at play. Peter shared that some landlords in some communities have a policy that on the 20th, everyone who hasn’t paid rent, eviction proceedings occur. He reported that they are having success in Durham, in part because they are negotiating with landlords and obtaining rent payment.

Yolanda thanked our guests for their time.

LaTasha shared that there will be a community event on 7-27 at the soup kitchen in Wilson. Eastpointe is trying to find candidates for Permanent Supportive Housing.

Meeting adjourned.